

the *Voice* of english lutheran



Vol. 22, Issue 12 • December, 2016

www.englishlutheran.org • office@englishlutheran.org • 608-784-9335 • 1509 King Street, La Crosse, WI 54601



The Season of Charity

And the people were full of a sense of celebration—all that giving!
And all given willingly, freely! King David was exuberant.

1 Chronicles 29:9, The Message

English Lutheran Church is a congregation known for having large hearts when it comes to giving. One of the best ways to prepare for Christmas and celebrate the birth of our Jesus is to look beyond our selves and consider alternative ways of giving. There are countless people in our nation, our community, and throughout the world who dwell in the shadows of poverty and destitution. For many, every day is a struggle – for food, clothing, shelter, and even human dignity.

This Christmas the Ministry Council will be sponsoring several opportunities to "give back" in our community and world.

See the article to the right about *The Giving Tree*.

See the article on page 5 for *Going Beyond the Giving Tree*.

The Giving Tree

HELP THOSE IN OUR CHURCH

Each year, the narthex is adorned with a beautiful Christmas tree, full of gift tags with suggested items to support those less fortunate. This year to help and serve those in need in our church, there will be **colored tags** on the tree listing a **gift card** you can purchase right in our building.



HELP THOSE BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The Ministry Council is sponsoring gifts from the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog. This is a chance for you to give a gift to someone in need in honor of a loved one.

The **ornaments** on the tree include such gifts as goats, chicks, pigs and bees to help families build a livelihood, fruit trees, farm tools, books for seminarians, and small micro-loans for women to start a business.

To purchase one of the items, choose an ornament, write a check for the amount indicated on the ornament and deposit it in the box designated for **ELCA Good Gifts**. Take the ornament with you and give it to the person you are honoring,



SCRIPTURE IN WORSHIP

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray. Peace be with you. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world. Thanks be to God! Sound familiar?

Worship at English has a familiarity, whether you grew up here, or joined this community from another church. Lutheran worship has long had a strong emphasis on liturgy, the prescribed order of elements in a worship service. Of course, the direct reading of scripture has always formed a large part of our worship. Generally speaking, our readings follow the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year cycle of prescribed readings which goes through essentially the entire Bible. A new lectionary year aligns with the beginning of the church calendar, at the start of Advent, so this article is well timed! Each of the three lectionary years focuses on a specific synoptic gospel, with the Gospel of John interspersed through special seasons. We soon leave the year of Luke and enter the year of Matthew on November 27.

However, the readings from the lectern or the Gospel proclaimed by a pastor

**View the performance
of
PRAISE!**

www.englishlutheran.org/video

or vicar as we all stand is not the only place in worship that contains scripture. The greeting before our prayer of the day is the Apostle Paul's greeting in 2 Cor. 13:14. Our response of "Thanks be to God", used as a response in our sending and familiar to many as a response at the end of scripture readings, is rooted in 1 Cor. 15:57. Even the call before that of "the word of the Lord" is scripture, from Jeremiah 2:4. One of my personal favorites is the greeting of peace, not only because of a chance to connect with all of you, but because this was the greeting of our resurrected Lord to terrified disciples in John 20:19.

There's more! As we stand to receive the words of the Gospel, we proclaim "Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life," echoing the words of Peter in John 6:68. In the great thanksgiving where we prepare to set apart common goods of bread and wine to holy use, the pastor declares "Lift up your hearts," a historically pivotal part of Christian liturgy known as the Sursum Corda (literally "lift heart") in Latin, the phrase being based on Lamentations 3:41. We continue with the unending hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord," based on Isaiah 6:3 and Matthew 21:9.

The "unending hymn," known often by its Latin name of "Sanctus" is a great example of juxtaposition of biblical texts. We have the vision of the

prophet alongside the triumphal entry which we commemorate the week before Easter in a single hymn. The core part of the prayer at the meal is known as the Words of Institution, and is based on the text of 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. But perhaps the most beautiful part of our tradition (in my opinion) is the phrase, "Lord, remember us in your Kingdom, and teach us to pray", a juxtaposition of the plea of the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42) and the request of the disciple (Luke 11:1). Then, of course, the prayer itself is based on scripture (Luke 11:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13).

Forgive me for the myriad of scripture references, but we're so close to Reformation Sunday (so a hat tip to Sola Scriptura) and this may be obvious to some, yet not obvious to others. What other examples have you noticed of use of scripture in our liturgy? I hope that this article serves as an inspiration to search for elements of our worship embedded in scripture. For some guidance, when you're in church, take a look at pages 1154 through 1159 in our hymnal. Grace and peace,



Eddie Kim - Director of Worship

WORSHIP TIMES

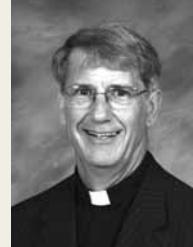
Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday..... 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.
Nursery Sun ...8:30 to 11:45 a.m.

IN CHRIST
We Welcome, Worship & Work
IN THE WORLD

PASTOR'S PRESS

CALLING A PASTOR

Congregations "call" a pastor rather than "hire" a pastor because we believe God is somehow involved in the process. Jesus said to the disciples, "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name." (John 15:16) In a similar way today, we believe God calls women and men to serve as pastors and teachers, missionaries and evangelists.



God's call to ministry has both an internal and external dimension. Pastors believe God is calling them to serve as ministers of Word and Sacrament in the Church. For me, that internal call came through a process of elimination. When I graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, I considered several job opportunities. Although I would initially get excited about the job, after a few days, I would get pulled back to a sense that I should be a pastor. It was as if there was a giant magnet that I could not see but I could not escape that kept pulling me toward pastoral ministry. Finally in August 1976, I realized that only the ministry would allow my heart and mind to be at peace and I enrolled in Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Theologically and practically, we recognize there is also an external dimension to the call. Ultimately, God calls women and men into the ministry through the agency of the Church. Candidates present themselves before the Church and the Church is responsible for evaluating the candidates' moral life, sincerity, and competence. When a candidate's internal call is confirmed by the Church, then the candidate is certified as available for call to a congregation. In this way, the Church fulfills the biblical injunction where Paul writes to Timothy regarding potential pastors and deacons, "Let them first be tested, then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons." (1 Timothy 3:10). A little later in the letter, Paul adds, "Do not ordain anyone hastily." (1 Timothy 5:22)

Here at English Lutheran, we elected a Call Committee in May to interview, evaluate and recommend to the congregation a person to serve as our next pastor. Our Call Committee has done due diligence in listening to the congregation and preparing a Ministry Site Profile. In the next stage of the process, the Call Committee primarily listens for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discern if a particular candidate is God's choice to serve our congregation. Therefore, I call on our congregation to regularly pray for our Call Committee as they discharge their important spiritual responsibility.

Pastor Mark Solyst

CHURCH OFFICE

main phone 784-9335
direct line..... 784-8876

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pastormark@englishlutheran.org

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Sarah Herathext 202
sarah@englishlutheran.org

CUSTODIAN

Terry Welch

ACTION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION (ACT)

Sunday and Monday, January 15 and 16

English Lutheran Church will host Action for Community Transformation, a synod-wide conference featuring Tom Thibodeau, Distinguished Professor of Servant Leadership at Viterbo University, and Susan Engh, Director of Congregational Based Organizing for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In addition to the speakers, the conference will include worship, workshops and an opportunity for congregational teams to strategize about the way they can make a difference in their own congregation and community.

Participants are invited to attend the conference in teams of three to five people. English Lutheran would like to have one or two teams that attend.

If you are interested in attending or want more information, please contact Pastor Mark or Niki Pohnl.

We also need volunteers to serve as greeters and to help serve the snacks and meals on Sunday afternoon and evening, and Monday.

If you are willing to help in any way, please contact Pastor Mark - pastormark@englishlutheran.org or Niki Pohnl - niki@englishlutheran.org

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Please refer to the schedules and reminders by the volunteer captains or the church office.

If you can't participate on your assigned date, *please find someone to replace you, and contact your volunteer captain and the church office so the change may be listed in the bulletin. If you wish to volunteer, please contact the person listed below to inquire.* Thanks for your time and talents as well as your cooperation.

ACOLYTES - Niki Pohnl

784-8876 x 204, niki@englishlutheran.org

ALTAR MINISTRY - Karla Strangstalien & Claudette Giblin

787-9803, walize18@yahoo.com.

787-0278, cngiblin@gundersenhealth.org

COFFEE SERVERS - Niki Pohnl

784-8876 x 204, niki@englishlutheran.org

COMMUNION ASSTS. - Carol Robertson

784-8876 x 202, carol@englishlutheran.org

COOKIE PROVIDERS - Carol Robertson

784-8876 x 202, carol@englishlutheran.org

LECTORS - Carol Robertson

784-8876 x 202, carol@englishlutheran.org

NURSERY ATTENDANTS - Niki Pohnl

784-8876 x 204, niki@englishlutheran.org

OFFERING COUNTERS - Bill Newburg

788-6312, wenkhn@centurylink.net

TECH TEAM - Joel Tock

608-633-0965, audiovideo@englishlutheran.org

USHERS 5:00 SAT. - Karla Strangstalien

787-9803, walize18@yahoo.com

USHERS 8:30 - Mark Flaten

mflaten61@gmail.com

USHERS 10:45 - Al Graewin

agraewin@aol.com

WELCOME CENTER - Grace Engen

507-429-0502

WORSHIP COORDINATOR - Ann Weidner

amweidne@gundersenhealth.org

Beyond the Giving Tree

This time of the year is the saddest time for lonely people, especially those who have recently lost a loved one or have no one to love them.

- Consider volunteering at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.
- Think about calling or visiting someone who is feeling down at this time.
- Think about stopping by a nursing home and visiting the elderly.

Many nursing home residents never get a visitor
Contact the church office for a list.

LA CROSSE COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER

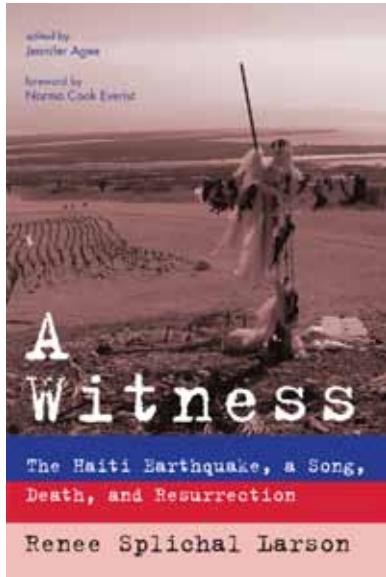
For more than 12 years, ELC members have contributed food donations to this free community dinner. We are looking for industrial size cans of green beans or jellied cranberries Visit www.lacrossethanksgivingdinner.com to volunteer. Due: Monday, November 21.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGER

There are many opportunities for individuals or families to participate as a Salvation Army Bell Ringer. **"Church Day" is November 17** where locations around the area are staffed by representatives from various churches. We will be located at K-Mart from 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Sign up on this day by calling the church office.**

HOLIDAY GIFT BOXES

Starting Nov. 13, we will distribute boxes you can add something to every day that could be used at such places as the Warming Center, New Horizons, WAFER, Salvation Army, or local nursing homes. Boxes will be sorted and items will be delivered to the various organizations. Due: The weekend of December 17-18..



A WITNESS

In 2010 Ben Larson, son of Bishop April Larson and Judd Larson, was working in Haiti along with his wife Renee and Johnathan Larson when an earthquake hit taking Ben's life.

Renee Splichal Larson's book *A Witness: The Haiti Earthquake, a Song, Death, and Resurrection* is her moving story of love, grief, survival, and new life. It is an account of the lives of three young people, their experience of the challenges, beauty, and hospitality of Haiti, and the tumult that overthrew all they held dear."

Minnesota Public Radio interview
<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2010/02/08/loss-in-haiti#gallery>

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Library Fund

- in memory of George (Casey) Ryan by Shirley Ryan

BAPTISMS

10/30...Chloe Grace Frost,
daughter of Adam and Alison Frost

MARRIAGES

10/21 .. Kathleen Volz and Eric Oyen

YEAR END OFFERING

All offering that should be included on your 2016 contribution statement needs to be received at the church office no later than noon on **Thursday, December 29**.

The church office is closed on December 30 and 31.

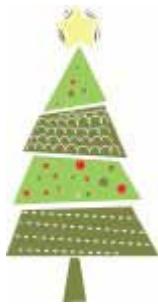
Offering postmarked before the 31st, but received after the 29th will be counted as 2017 offering. Thank you!

ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE

Annual report deadline is **Friday, January 6**. It would be helpful to have reports submitted electronically, either by writing it in an e-mail or in an attached Word document, to enable easy formatting (adding page numbers, etc). Please e-mail annual reports to:
jennifer@englishlutheran.org.

Annual Meeting is Sunday, February 12.

Library LINK



Make a selection from our large collection of Advent and Christmas books and DVD's. You will find a good variety, including Advent activities, board books for the very young, and of course, "The Christmas Story", written in both old and new versions.



ADULT EDUCATION & ADULT GROUP LIFE
are now listed on the web.

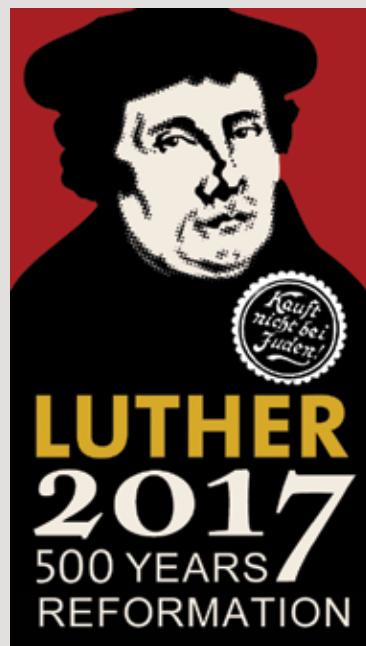
Click here or go to:
[www.englishlutheran.org/
connect-grow.html](http://www.englishlutheran.org/connect-grow.html)

FAITH EXPLORATIONS

We will begin our next book, Bruce Epperly's *Process Theology: Embracing Adventures With God*. New members are always welcome.
When.....Mondays
Time6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Where.....Conference Room
Leaders...Kathy Hageseth, 787-1904
For future information, go to Adult Education on www.englishlutheran.org.

Path to Reformation: Tour of Luther's Germany hosted by the La Crosse Area Synod June 12-21, 2017

Discover your roots as a Lutheran in the footsteps of Martin Luther when the La Crosse Area Synod ELCA travels to Germany in celebration and honor of the 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. Time spent in classrooms, castles and the countryside of Luther's Germany will help your faith tradition come alive. My visits to Germany have strengthened my faith and renewed my understanding. It will do the same for you. I hope you will join others from our synod on this great excursion. Read the itinerary information below.



DOWNLOAD THE BROCHURE

For the full color brochure detailing the breadth and depth of this footsteps of Luther tour go to:
www.lacrosseareasy.org
click on "Path to Reformation" in the lower right corner of the home page.

Fill out the registration form. Please feel free to make copies for those interested from other churches or pass the link along.

We hope you can join others from English Lutheran and the La Crosse Area Synod on this inspiring journey.

Questions: Janet Melby, jrhmelby@yahoo.com,
608-782-6109

CELEBRATING THE REFORMATION

For **reformation resources and information**, bookmark and refer to

now and during the upcoming year:

www.lacrosseareasy.org/500th-anniversary-of-the-reformation

What you need and want to know is there!

Save the church postage and save a tree!

Sign up for e-newsletters at
office@englishlutheran.org or e-mail sarah@englishlutheran.org.

You'll receive the monthly and weekly newsletters in your in box instead of your mailbox. We promise to never e-mail you more than twice a week (if that!).

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 New Members	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:30a Worship 9:30a Coffee Hour 9:45a Education Hour 10:00a Choir Rehearsal 10:45a Worship 6:30p HS Youth Group	6:30p Faith Explorations	Come for Supper VOICE DEADLINE 6:30a Men's Faith Forum 8:45a Quilters 9:00a Christian Parenting	3:30p Property Committee Dinner & Programming - see website for schedule	7:00a Fayze's Seekers 6:30p Jesus of Nazareth	5:00p Worship 9:00a Altar Ministry	
11 Burritos	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:30a Worship 9:30a Coffee Hour 9:45a Education Hour 10:00a Choir Rehearsal 10:45a Worship	6:30p Faith Explorations	8:45a Quilters 6:00P Evangelism Council	5:45p Youth Steering Dinner & Programming - see website for schedule	7:00a Fayze's Seekers 5:00p Middle East Prayer Vigil 6:30p Jesus of Nazareth	5:00p Wedding Rehearsal	5:00p Sunday School Christmas Program 6:00p Advent Fellowship Night
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
NO EDUCATION HOUR 8:30a Worship 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:00a Choir Rehearsal 10:45a Worship 6:30p HS Youth Group	6:30p Faith Explorations 6:30p Young Women in Conversation	6:30a Men's Faith Forum 8:45a Quilters 9:00a Christian Parenting 5:00p Marketing Team	12:00p Community Conversations 5:00p Christmas Rehearsal & Bulletins 6:00p Cocoa & Caroling NO DINNER /PROGMNG	7:00a Fayze's	OFFICE CLOSES AT NOON	
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:30a Worship	OFFICE CLOSED	8:45a Quilters 1:30p Mary Circle 6:30p Vision Board	NO DINNER OR PROGRAMMING	7:00a Fayze's	OFFICE CLOSED	4:00p Wedding NO SATURDAY WORSHIP

Sugar Creek Bible Camp UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 13-15... High School Retreat
3 days, 2 nights, 5 meals - \$75

Jan. 20-22... Family Retreat
3 days, 2 nights, 4 meals – TBA

www.sugarcreekbiblecamp.org
camp@sgrcreek.org • 608-734-3113

NURSERY IS OPEN
during Wednesday
evening programs.



Sunday School Schedule

**9:45-10:30 a.m.,
ages 2 yrs. - 6th gr.**

Dec. 4class and Christmas Program practice
Dec. 11 ...class and Christmas Program practice
Dec. 18 ...large group activity
Dec. 25 ...no class
Jan. 1.....no class



SUNDAY SCHOOL *Christmas Program*

DECEMBER 17 AT 5:00 P.M.

SOUP DINNER, COCOA,
SWEET TREATS AND CRAFTS.



Synod School of Theology

You are invited to take this opportunity to grow in faith, develop your spirituality, deepen your discipleship, discern your baptismal vocation, and learn more about the Bible, theology and the Church.

Three courses will be offered as six-week sessions and offered three times each year in the fall, winter and spring. Courses will include: Bible, Theology, Church History, Ministry Skills and Spiritual Development.

The first session begins January 12, 2017.

Please talk to Pastor Solyst if interested.

Visit the synod web page:
[http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/
synod-school-of-theology](http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/synod-school-of-theology)



We are going to
Winter Park, Colorado
February 17-21, 2017

Welcome non-skiers,
family and friends!

COST OF TRIP

less than \$100/day prepaid includes

- ..• round-trip van transportation
- ..• 4 nights lodging
- ..• 3 day lift ticket and rentals

\$50.00 deposit due

Questions: Robin Cosby, 385-5309

PINE RIDGE Indian Reservation

July 30 - August 4, 2017



9th -12th grade
We will need
parents to chaperone!

\$350 per person

ABOUT PINE RIDGE

South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation is surrounded by the panoramic beauty of the Badlands. Rolling hills, forests and river valleys extend throughout this area known for some of the state's finest fishing and hunting. The Pine Ridge Reservation is the second largest reservation in the country; it is roughly the size of the state of Connecticut. It is divided into eight districts: Eagle Nest, Pass Creek, Wakpamni, La Creek, Pine Ridge, White Clay, Medicine Root, Porcupine and Wounded Knee. Despite the natural beauty of these communities, residents of the reservation are struggling with poverty,

continues on page 9

**FAITH FORMATION****Next Step - Middle School**

Sunday mornings, 9:45-10:30 a.m.

The Bridge - High School

Sunday mornings, 9:45-10:30 a.m.

High School

1st & 3rd Sunday evenings, 6:30 p.m.

November 6 and 20

FUN & FELLOWSHIP**Cocoa and Carols**

December 21, 6:00 p.m.

Caroling with our church family around the blocks near the church and enjoying fellowship with hot cocoa afterwards!

HS Joint Lock-InDecember 2, 9:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.
with First Lutheran of Onalaska.**SERVE & VOLUNTEER****December Toys for Tots**

Date and time still to be determined!

Questions? Contact Kerri Jahnke
kerri@englislutheran.org**PINE RIDGE - continued from page 8**

unemployment, addiction, health problems and more. The realities of life on the Pine Ridge Reservation are nothing short of heartbreaking. Around 97% of the population lives below the federal poverty line. Most 2-3-bedroom homes on the reservation are occupied by more than 20 people. Life expectancy is shorter than in any other community in the Western Hemisphere aside from Haiti. Although there are no easy solutions, there is much to learn from a people who have weathered both present and past trouble.

SERVING IN PINE RIDGE

- Serve through painting, building, cleaning, yard work or other simple work projects.
- Plan and lead kids programming for children in the community, including Bible lessons, games, crafts and reading.
- Students will have the opportunity to participate with each of the above service sites during the week.

**Advent Fellowship**

hosted by the Fellowship Council

Saturday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m.

- meal provided
- making and eating your own lefsa
- children's story time about Jesus
- decorating ornaments
- fun filled games!!!!

Look forward to a fun time in fellowship!

**Walking
- with -
GOD***40 day journey of authentic
faith conversations*

Thank you to all of those who prayed for and who were involved in the small group ministry this fall. We have heard great feedback from groups. Many are saying "We Make the Road by Walking" is a great book to form authentic deep faith conversations. The small groups have been intentionally looking at scripture with the book as guide, intentionally praying together, and have formed relationships through the 6 week of authentic faith conversations.

We are excited to say we had 15 groups that met over the course of the 6 weeks. We are looking forward to adding more groups and inviting others to join the already existing groups in the next 6 week phase.

We will be having more 6 week phases of "Walking with God" groups coming up in 2017! Look forward to more details about joining groups, when the next 6 week phase will be, and different options for locations of small groups.

If you have any questions about "Walking With God" please contact Kerri Jahnke
kerri@englislutheran.org

FINANCIAL REPORT

As our wonderful fall weather continued through October, our General Fund financial condition improved and gave us a better outlook for the rest of the year. Our General Fund receipts increased by nearly \$6000 as Envelope Offering increased by \$4000 and Simply Giving went up by \$2000 over October 2015. Our year to date results are up by over \$13,000 from 2015, which is very welcome as we approach year end.

Disbursements decreased considerably for the month compared to October 2015. This was due largely to having only two

pay periods instead of three, as we had last year. The net result is that we had a gain of just over \$12,000 for the month, and a gain of \$15,000 for the year to date.

Our mortgage reduction fund, Keep the Vision Growing, also had a good month, as we received nearly \$30,000 to pay against our mortgage. After our regular payment was made for October, our mortgage balance dropped below \$400,000 and is now just over \$391,000! A big THANK YOU to all for your ongoing and generous giving to our general and mortgage funds.

The line item of the month is Five Big Rocks. This line item is for our programming. It includes Fellowship, Ministry (including Stewardship), Discipleship (Christian Education for all ages), Worship and Evangelism.

Now that the holidays are approaching, we wish a joyous and meaningful season for you and your loved ones. We look forward to seeing you in church.

Finance Committee

GENERAL FUND OCTOBER 2016

RECEIPTS	CURRENT MONTH			YEAR-TO-DATE		
	Actual	Budget	2015 Actual	Actual	Budget	2015 Actual
Envelope Offerings	37,371	33,300	33,449	311,387	375,000	336,045
Simply Giving Plan	23,346	21,465	21,356	230,947	220,830	215,823
Other General	546	660	704	34,530	15,700	13,679
General Fund Total	61,263	55,425	55,509	576,864	611,530	565,547
Benevolence	145		155	4,443		2,686
TOTAL	61,408	55,425	55,664	581,307	611,530	568,233
Communion Fund	5,572			13,205		
Memorials	2,759			11,906		
Hungry Jar	948			6,824		
Mortgage Reduction	29,749			163,810		
DISBURSEMENTS						
Benevolence	4,628	5,790	5,817	59,715	61,080	58,059
Stability Triangle	43,233	60,408	59,292	477,278	535,530	489,600
Five Big Rocks	1,378	6,088	5,758	29,002	47,420	35,211
TOTAL	49,239	72,286	70,864	565,995	644,030	582,870
Communion Fund	2,205			15,091		
Hungry Jar	834			5,698		
Mortgage Reduction (from Building Fund)				6,532		
Principal	11,130		7,197	143,717		580,081
Interest	1,619		5,552	18,773		61,217



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THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Thrivent Financial offers members an opportunity to direct Choice Dollars to community organizations including English Lutheran Church. In 2015, eighteen Thrivent households directed Choice Dollars to English Lutheran and we received \$2,532.00 from Thrivent as a result. The potential for English Lutheran, however, is tremendous as we have over 50 Thrivent households that have \$40,110.00 Choice Dollars available to them.

Choice Dollars provide a valuable resource for us as a congregation. These undesignated funds allow us to purchase non-budgeted items such as our new coffee maker in the kitchen and some of the new furniture in our Fellow-

ship Hall. Thrivent Choice Dollars also allowed us to replace our out-of-date Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) that is kept in the kiosk in the narthex.

With the Bethlehem Event looming on December 16-17, 2017, I am sure the Thrivent Choice Dollars will be put to good use in the coming year.

As a congregation we thank Thrivent Financial for making Choice Dollars available. We also thank our English Lutheran members who have eligible Thrivent Financial Dollars and designate them for our congregation. We promise to put these dollars to good use.

THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS

All 195 Thrivent members at English Lutheran are eligible to lead a Thri-

vent Action Team. An Action Team can develop a *one-time fundraiser, a service activity or an educational event* and Thrivent Financial will provide a promotional banner, invitation and thank-you cards, team T-Shirts, and \$250 to help the project along.

Heather Young, an English Lutheran member, and a financial planner with Thrivent is willing to help any Thrivent member develop an idea and implement an Action Team project. Examples of Action Team projects include our Children's Worship Bags in the narthex, Community Conversations, and Bible Camp scholarships. If you are looking for Action Team ideas, talk with Niki, Pastor Mark or, of course, Heather Young. heather.young@thrive.com

